

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 091501Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7292

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BELGRADE 4508

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YO, XF

SUBJECT: FURTHER YUGOSLAV VIEWS ON LEBANON AND MIDDLE EAST

REF: STATE 1#.402 (#)

1. AMBASSADOR MET WITH FSFA ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SEKULOVSKI JULY 6 ON LEBANON AND MIDDLE EAST.
FOLLOWING RESTRICTED TO INFORMATION NOT COVERED IN
HABIB-BELOVSKI CONVERSATION (REFTEL).

2. ON REASON FOR YUGOSLAV OPPOSITION TO SYRIAN INTER-
VENTION IN LEBANON, SEKULOVSKI MORE EXPLICIT THAN
BELOVSKI: "IF WE WERE TO RESPECT ANY INTERFERENCE BY
ONE COUNTRY IN THE AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER THEN THIS COULD
OPEN THE DOOR TO CERTAIN COUNTRIES CLAIMING A RIGHT
TO INTERFERE IN YUGOSLAV AFFAIRS."

3. SEKULOVSKI CLAIMED ASAD TOLD THEM THAT WHEN TROUBLES
BEGAN IN LEBANON, MANY CHRISTIAN VILLAGES AND TOWNS WERE
SURROUNDED BY MUSLIMS AND THE MUSLIMSBEGAN ATTACKING THE
PEOPLE. BETWEEN 200,000 AND 300,000 OF THESE PEOPLE FLED
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TO SYRIA. SYRIA WAS CONCERNED THAT THE CONFLICT MIGHT

SPREAD TO OTHER GROUPS IN THE AREA AND IT COULD NOT SIMPLY STAND OFF FROM WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN LEBANON. ALL THE INDUSTRY IN LEBANON IS IN THE HANDS OF "SYRIAN RICH PEOPLE". AND PART OF THE PROBLEM HAS TO DO WITH THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF THE PEOPLES IN THE AREA. EVERY LEBANESE FAMILY HAS RELATIVES IN SYRIA, AND THESE TIES ARE QUITE STRONG. ASAD SAID THAT WHEN THEY ENTERED LEBANON THE FORCES ENCIRCLING THE CHRISTIAN TOWNS AND VILLAGES WITHDREW BEFORE THEIR ADVANCING TROOPS. BUT WHEN THEIR TROOPS REACHED BEIRUT, AND AREAS CONTROLLED BY THE PLO OR JUMBLATT'S FORCES, THE CLASHES STARTED. MANY, MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND TOWNS DESTROYED ACCORDING TO ASAD. SEKULOVSKI SAID THAT AT THIS POINT YUGOSLAVS WERE ASKED BY JUMBLATT AND THE PALESTINIANS TO DO WHAT THEY COULD WITH THE SYRIANS TO BRING A HALT TO THEIR INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON SINCE SUCH INTERFERENCE IF CONTINUED COULD HAVE LED TO INTERVENTION BY FRANCE.

4. SEKULOVSKI SAID SYRIANS BELIEVED AT BEGINNING OF THEIR INTERVENTION THAT FIGHTING COULD BE ENDED IN 1 OR 2 DAYS. ASAD SAID TO GOY SYRIANS WILLING TO WITHDRAW IF ATTACKS ON THEIR FORCES CEASED AND IF SOME OF THEIR TROOPS COULD BE LEFT BEHIND AS PART OF ARAB LEAGUE FORCE.

5. YUGOSLAVS TOLD ASAD ALTHOUGH THEY OPPOSED TO AN "ARABIZATION" OF SITUATION, CLASHES WERE CONTINUING AND ONLY SOLUTION POSSIBLE WAS ARAB LEAGUE INTERVENTION. GOY ACCEPTED THIS AS ONLY MEANS OF BRINGING HALT TO SYRIAN INTERFERENCE IN LEBANON. THIS VIEW CONVEYED TO ALGERIA, TUNISIA, SUDAN, LIBYA, EGYPT, IRAQ AND ARAFAT (IN ADDITION TO YUGOSLAV CONSULTATIONS WITH US, USSR, FRANCE, DENMARK, ITALY, SWEDEN, PAKISTAN AND INDIA). SEKULOVSKI STRESSED THAT WHILE YUGOSLAVIA THUS SUPPORTS ARAB LEAGUE'S DIFORTS, THEY CONTINUE TO FIRMLY SUPPORT PLO. THERE CAN BE NO SOLUTION WITHOUT INCLUDING THE PLO AND RESOLVING PROBLEMS OF PALESTINIANS. YUGOSLAVS MADE THIS POINT CLEAR TO ASAD AND ASKED SYRIANS TO RESPECT PLO'S INTERESTS. YUGOSLAVS HAVE REQUESTED ARAFAT TO HAVE THE PLO STOP FIRING AND TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE RESPECTS CAIRO AGREEMENT AND LEBANON AGREEMENT. BUT WITH PLO UNDER FIRE AND CONTINUED FIGHTING THIS IS DIFFICULT.

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6. YUGOSLAVS ALSO STRESSED TO ASAD THAT THERE CAN BE NO SOLUTION TO REGION'S PROBLEMS WITHOUT RECONCILIATION BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. IT MUST BE ACCEPTED THAT THE SINAI AGREEMENT CANNOT BE CANCELLED. THE INFLUENCE OF SAUDI ARABIA IN THIS IS VERY GREAT AT THE MOMENT. AGREEMENT REACHED AT THEIR JUNE 23RD MEETING ON NEED TO FORMULATE A COMMON PLATFORM. YUGOSLAVIA AND ALL PARTIES BELIEVE PLATFORM SHOULD INCLUDE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLE POINTS: (1) WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES TO 1967

FRONTIERS; (2) "REALIZATION" OF A COUNTRY FOR PALESTINIANS;
(3) RESPECT FOR EXISTENCE OF ALL COUNTRIES IN AREA, INCLUDING
ISRAEL.

7. YUGOSLAVS BELIEVE IF NO COMMON PLATFORM CAN BE AGREED UPON,
NO SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE. THEY TOLD ASAD THAT IF NO AGREEMENT IS
REACHED BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE PLO, NO SOLUTION IS POSSIBLE.
THEY BELIEVE IRAQ ACCEPTS THE 1967 FRONTIERS, WITHOUT CHANGES.
IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO RESPECT THE 1967 FRONTIERS, THOUGH
THIS IS A NECESSITY THE REJECTION FRONT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE.
SEKUGVSKI ASSERTED ALGERIA WILL RESPECT "EVERYTHING". THEY
WILL NOT BE A PROBLEM.

8. YUGOSLAVS TOLD ASAD THEY HAD SEEN VIA THE FRENCH

AMBASSADOR HERE FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS
ON THE SITUATION IN LEBANON AND THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY VIEWED
FRENCH PROPOSAL WITH INTEREST, BUT COULD NOT SUPPORT THE HOLDING
OF SUCH DISCUSSIONS IN PARIS. AND ANY ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSIONS

LIKE THOSE OVER VIETNAM, FOR INSTANCE, WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE
TO A SOLUTION OF BASIC PROBLEMS. KADAM TOLD THEM SYRIANS
HAD DISCUSSED WITH THE FRENCH THE INTEREST OF THE LATTER IN
WORKING WITH THE INTERNAL FORCES IN LEBANON TO FIND A SOLUTION
TO THE PROBLEMS, A PRECONDITION FOR WHICH IS THAT ALL PARTIES
STOP FIRING. YUGOSLAVS WOULD SUPPORT FRENCH ASSISTANCE, BUT
ONLY TO HELP BRING ABOUT A CEASEFIRE. BEYOND A CEASEFIRE, A
SOLUTION TO THE LEBANESE PROBLEM CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY BY THE
INTERNAL LEBANESE FORCES THEMSELVES. THEY HAVE TOLD THE ARAB
COUNTRIES YUGOSLAVIA WOULD SUPPORT MIDDLE EAST ROUNDTABLE
DISCUSSIONS WHICH INCLUDED THE INTERNAL LEBANESE FORCES, AN
ARAB LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE AND PERHAPS ALSO A PLO REPRESENTATIVE,
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BUT SUCH DISCUSSIONS ARE FOR THE PRESENT BLOCKED BY THE COA
TINUING FIGHTING. JUMBLATT IS A HINDERANCE TO THE COVENING OF
SUCH DISCUSSIONS AS ARE CERTAIN PLO FORCES.

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) REFERENCE--AS RECEIVED.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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9. ASAD TOLD YUGOSLAVS THEY HAD STOPPED SUPPLYING ANY FORCES IN LEBANON ONE MONTH AGO. BUT THE PALESTINIANS CONTINUED TO BE SUPPLIED TOT SEA, WHILE THE OTHER FORCES WERE NOT SO SUPPLIED. SYRIANS TOLD YUGOSLAVS THAT PALESTINIANS WERE BEING SUPPLIED BY VARIOUS COUNTIRES. THEIR AMBASSADOR IN LEBANON REPORTED THAT A BOMB WAS "SHOT" RECENTLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM HIS HOUSE, BUT IT FAILED TO EXPLODE. "CUBA WAS WRITTEN ON THE BOMB." HE LIVES IN AN AREA CONTROLLED BY THE MUSLIMS. HE REPORTED EVERY HOUSE AROUND THERE HAS ARMS AND THAT IT IS THE SAME ALL OVER BEIRUT. SO IT APPEARS THE CRISIS WILL CONTINUE SINCE "BOTH SIDES" ARE VERY WELL ARMED. IF SOMEONE STOPS THEM, "OK". IF NOT, THE CRISIS WILL CONTINUE, PERHAPS "FOR YEARS AND YEARS".

10. SEKULOVSKI CONTINUED THAT AS U.S. KNOWS, VARIOUS FACTIONS OF THE PLO ARE SUPPORTED BY VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THE SECURITY FOR THE AMERICAN EVACUATION, FOR INSTANCE, WAS ARRANGED THROUGH THAT FACTION OF THE PLO WITH WHICH SADAT HAS INFLUENCE. ASAD HAS INFLUENCE IN ANOTHER PART, IRAQ IN STILL ANOTHER, AND SO ON. IT WAS GOOD THE AMERICAN EVACUATION WAS CARRIED OUT AS IT WAS, GOOD PERHAPS POLITICALLY FOR YOU. SADAT, OF COURSE, HAS CONSIDERABLE TIES AND INFLUENCE WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT. THE PLO ALSO HAS GOOD RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND KUWAIT. CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MIGHT NOT BE ACCEPTABLE FOR ASAD.

11. IT IS YUGOSLAV CONCLUSION, AND THEY TOLD THIS TO KADAM, THAT WERE SYRIA TO PRESSURE ARAFAT AND SOME OF THE MORE FLEXIBLE PLO LEADERS TO ACCEPT A JOINT ARAB POSITION ON LEBANON AND THE

MIDDLE EAST, ARAFAT WOULD HAVE TWO ALTERNATIVES. WITH SYRIANS PRESSURE ON ARAFAT IT IS POSSIBLE ARAFAT MIGHT RETURN TO IRAQ AND OPT FOR A STRENGTHENING OF THE REJECTION FRONT--IF THE SYRIANS PRESSURE ARAFAT TOO MUCH HE "WILL" OPT FOR THE REJECTION FRONT AND THIS WOULD BE THE MOST DAMAGING, FOR WITH ARAFAT'S SUPPORT THE REJECTION FRONT WOULD UNDERTAKE MORE HIJACKINGS, BOMBINGS, AND SO ON. THEY HAVE GOOD, WELL-TRAINED COMMANDOS, THEY ARE "DISPERSED EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD". AND ONLY ARAFAT CAN STOP THEM. ARAFAT'S PEOPLE WERE RECENTLY IN YUGOSLAVIA SPEAKING WITH THE ARAB STUDENTS HERE, 2,000 OF THEM, EXPLAINING THE PLO'S POSITIONS. ARAFAT HAS THE MOST INFLUENCE, HIS PEOPLE CAN TALK WITH THEM (THE STUDENTS) AND THEY LISTEN.

1. SEKULOVSKI SAID SECOND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE FOR ARAFAT IS TO MOVE TO THE EGYPTION POSITION AND RESPECT THE AGREEMENTS. YUGOSLAVIA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE PLO AS THE SOLE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS. IF THE PLO DOES NOT HAVE SUPPORT, DIFFERENT GROUPS WILL ARISE AND THIS WILL MAKE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS FAR MORE DIFFICULT TO REACH. AT SAME TIME YUGOSLAVS ACKNOWLEDGED TO ASAD THE IMPORTANCE OF SYRIA AND TOLD HIM THEY WOULD NOT SUPPORT A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT THAT RESULTED IN A WEAKENING OF SYRIA'S POSITION.

13. THUS YUGOSLAVS BELIEVE ARAFAT MAY OR MAY NOT BEGIN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IRAQUIS. THEY ALSO THINK IT POSSIBLE THE SYRIANS AND IRAQUIS WILL BEGIN DISCUSSIONS. SEKULOVSKI SAID HE DID NOT THINK SAUDI ARABIA IS "INTERESTED" IN IMPROVED SYRIAN-IRAQI RELATIONS. IT'S BETTER FOR THEM (THE SAUDIS) TO HAVE "CONFLICT" BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ. WERE THERE RELATIONS WITH SYRIA BETTER, IRAQ WOULD PUSH FOR GREATER INFLUENCE IN KUWAIT AT THE EXPENSE OF SAUDI ARABIA.

14. TO MY QUERY ABOUT SOVIET--YUGOSLAV TALKS, SEKULOVSKI SAID SOVIETS HAD TOLD GOY THEY WOULD NOT INTERFERE. AND THE FRENCH SAID THEY BELEIVED THE AMERICANS WOULD NOT INTERFERE. SO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ONLY INTERFERENCE POSSIBLE MIGHT BE FROM ISRAEL. OF COURSE, THERE ARE REASONS FOR WHICH THE ISRAELIS MIGHT INTERFERE AND ALSO REASONS WHY IT WOULD NOT BE IN THEIR INTEREST TO DO SO. ACCORDING TO THE SYRIANS, THE ISRAELIS MIGHT INTERVENE UNDER THE PRETEXT "TO PROTECT LEBANON", HOPING EVENTUALLY TO ISOLATE THE PLO. ON THE OTHER HAND, ISRAELI INTERVENTION WOULD SERVE TO UNIFY OTHER RAB COUNTRIES, WTNCH IS NOT IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST. THE PRESENT SITUATION IS, OF COURSE, VERY SENSITIVE. THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY THE SOVIET UNION WOULD INTERFERE OR INVOLVE ITSELF IN A CONDLICT WITH THE U.S. IN ANY SITUATION SHORT OF AN ATTACK ON THE SOVIET UNION. OF COURSE EVERYBODY HAS SOME FORCES THAT THEY ARE SUPPORTING THERE.

15. TO MY FINAL QUESTION ABOUT "YOUR" ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION, SEKULOVSKI RESPONDED THAT IT WAS VERY BAD. WHY, BECAUSE THERE IS NO UNITY AMONG THE ARAB COUNTRIES IN SPITE OF ARAB LEAGUE RESOLUTIONS. THEY DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH TROOPS TO SEND IN TO PUT A STOP TO THE FIRING. SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT SENDING IN SOLDIERS BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE NO SECURITY FOR THEM, IN SPITE OF SAUDI ARABIA'S GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE PLO. SAUDI ARABIA SUPPORTS THE PLO, THOUGH NOT IN EVERYTHING. ON THE PLO STAND REGARDING JERUSALEM, SAUDI ARABIA DOES SUPPORT IT. JERUSALEM IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR SAUDI ARABIA. BUT SAUDI ARABIA WILL NOT SUPPORT EVERY PLO ACTION. IN TERMS OF PROGRESS, THERE HAVE BEEN CHANGES IN DOCUMENTS "WHICH CAN BE RESPECTED BY ALL SIDES", EXCEPT JUMBLATT. JUMBLATT WAS ONCE SUPPORTED BY SAUDI ARABIA BECAUSE HE IS A MUSLIM, BUT NOT LATER IN HIS PUSH FOR "INTERNAL LEBANESE REFORMS".

16. I STRESSED THAT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN A SPLIT IN THE ARAB WORLD TO BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES. WE RECOGNIZE THAT ARAB UNITY IS A PREREQUISITE FOR PEACE. I SAID THAT IN MY PERSONAL OPINION IF ARAFAT WERE TO OPT FOR THE REJECTION FRONT UNDER IRAQI AUSPICES IT WOULD BE EXACTLY WHAT SOME ISRAELIS WANT. THESE ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WOULD STRENGTHEN THEIR U.S. SUPPORT BY SHOWING THEIR ENEMIES TO BE EXTREMISTS. SEKULOVSKI ENTHUSIASTICALLY AGREED WITH THIS ASSESSMENT.

17. SEKULOVSKI ASSERTED THAT HE HAD BEEN VERY OPEN WITH ME.
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HE HAD GIVEN ME ALL THE INFORMATION THEY HAD, EVEN MORE THAN THEY GAVE US IN WASHINGTON. HE MENTIONED THAT IF I HAD NOT ASKED TO SEE HIM, HE WOULD HAVE CALLED ME IN. HE STRESSED YUGOSLAV INTEREST IN SUGGESTIONS WE MAY HAVE IF WE THINK THEY CAN BE HELPFUL.
SILBERMAN

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